



LOBIVANELLUS LOBATUS.

Wattled Pewit.

Tringa lobata, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. lxx.—Vieill. 2nde Edit. du Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxxv. p. 209.

Wattled Sandpiper, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 313; and Gen. Hist., vol. ix. p. 305.

Vanellus lobatus, Vieill. Ency. Méth., Part. III. p. 1075.

Charadrius lobatus, Wagl. Syst. Av., Sp. 51.

Vanellus Novæ-Hollandiæ, Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xi. p. 516.

Vanellus gallinaceus, Jard. and Selb. Ill. Orn., vol. iii. pl. 84.

Kalloo-nagh, Aborigines of New South Wales.

Alarm-bird of the Colonists.

THIS species is common in most parts of New South Wales, and on some of the islands in Bass's Straits, particularly on Green Island, where it was breeding at the period of my visit in January 1839. I have never observed it in Van Diemen's Land, but it is not improbable that it will hereafter be found to be an inhabitant of that island as well as of those above mentioned. It has not yet been observed in Western Australia, neither have I heard of its occurrence on the northern coast of the continent. It is an attractive and showy bird, and when unmolested approaches sufficiently close to the dwellings of the settlers to permit its actions and manners to be minutely observed. Among other places where I noticed this species, I may mention that I saw it in flocks on the edge of the small ponds immediately adjoining the house of C. Throsby, Esq., at Bong Bong, on the fine estate of James Macarthur, Esq., at Camden, at Yarrundi on the Upper Hunter. Open flats and high dry grounds appeared to be equally suitable to its existence; for nothing could be more sterile and parched than the islands in Bass's Straits, when compared with the humid flats of the Upper Hunter, covered with grasses and rank vegetation; yet in both these situations I observed it at nearly the same season of the year: its food consists of insects and worms. While on the ground it has much of the carriage of the common European Pewit (*Vanellus cristatus*), but a decided difference is observable in its mode of running, and in its more bold and attractive manners. The more lengthened form of its wings also induces a considerable difference in its flight, which has less of the flapping laboured action so conspicuous in that of the Pewit.

In some parts of New South Wales this ornamental bird has been much persecuted, and it has consequently become as shy and distrustful there as it is tame and familiar in others; hence it has obtained the name of the Alarm Bird from its rising in the air, flying round and screaming at the approach of an intruder, causing not only all of its own species to follow its example, but every other animal in the district to be on the alert. This fact I had ample opportunities of verifying on the islands in Bass's Straits, where I had scarcely stepped from the boat before every creature was made acquainted with my presence; no small annoyance to me, whose object was to secure the wary cereopsis and eagle, which with thousands of petrels and many other kinds of water-birds tenant these dreary islands.

The sexes are scarcely to be distinguished from each other, either in size or plumage; and both possess the spur on the shoulder, but it is much more developed in the male than in the female; the beautiful primrose-coloured wattle, with which the colouring of the bill and the bold eye closely assimilate, the pinky vermilion legs, and the strongly contrasted colours of its plumage, render it one of the most beautiful of the Plovers yet discovered.

The eggs, which are placed on the bare ground, are two in number.

Head, back of the neck, and sides of the chest black; back, wing-coverts and scapularies dark greyish brown inclining to cinnamon; primaries black; tail white, crossed near the extremity by a broad band of black; sides of the face, throat and all the under surface white; eye rich primrose-yellow; wattles primrose-yellow; bill pale yellow, with a horn-coloured tip; tarsi purplish red; scales black; spur yellow.

The figures are those of a male and a female of the natural size.